Chapter 3, 2211. The Future.

by Jen Masengarb, Kayce Bayer, Gabrielle Lyon and Allison Leake

In the year 2211, Chicago is geographically segregated and virtual reality is the primary bridge for staying connected across neighborhoods. Teens Octavius, Tsang, Codex, Gabriela, and Rafael are assigned to the City Planning Council for their Year of Civic Service. They struggle to come together to make decisions that will affect a neighborhood that none of them live in.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

• What surprises you about 2211? Are there any aspects of the future that seem familiar?
• How does each character consider which proposal to accept? What personal experiences influence their decisions?
• Why do Tsang and Codex decide to go to Uptown? Why motivates Octavius? Does the experience in Uptown change their perspectives at all? Do you think it was a good idea to go to Uptown? Why or why not?
• What does Octavius mean when he says “I was wrong to think I could make a decision from my apartment?” Do you agree with him?
• What are Rafael and Gabriela trying to get Tsang to do? Why?
• What advice would you give Tsang? If you were in Tsang’s position, what would you do?
• Who has power in the group? How do they use their power?
• At the end of the chapter the group has come to a decision—but it is not unanimous. What do you think you would have done in this situation? How would you have decided which developer proposal to pick?
• What project do you think they recommended to the City to proceed with? What makes you think this?
FEATURED COMMUNITY AREAS

44—Chatham ("Obama Gresham")
Tsang’s home

52—East Side
Nature Preserve

32—Loop ("City Core")
Octavius’ home
City Hall

30—South Lawndale ("New Lawndale")
Codex’s home

3—Uptown
Graceland Cemetery
Aragon Ballroom
Green Mill
Uptown Station
COMMUNITY AREAS INFORMATION

Chatham (“Obama Gresham”)
The community area of Obama Gresham is located approximately 10 miles directly south of downtown. The area is bordered by 79th Street (north), rail tracks (east), 95th Street (south), and Wallace Street / approximately Damen Avenue (to the west). In honor of President Barack Obama, the 44th president of the United States, the Auburn Gresham neighborhood was changed to Obama Gresham in 2066, 50 years after his presidency. Today, the neighborhood is dense and new tall apartment buildings have sprung up to meet the demand of a growing population.

East Side
Over the course of 200 years, the city increasingly consolidated services in denser neighborhoods and invested along public transit lines. Less populated areas—including the once heavily industrial zones on the Southeast Side, 12 miles south of City Core—were prioritized for natural restoration. The city purchased the land and protected open, natural reserves along the lakefront for restoration as wetland, marsh and prairie. This future vision is drawn, in part, from proposals such as the Calumet Open Space Reserve Plan, the Calumet Initiative and the Burnham Greenway.

Loop (“City Core”)
City Core has become increasingly dense with businesses and residential units in the area centered around the intersection of the Chicago River and Lake Michigan. A forest of skyscrapers defines the horizon and many of the tallest buildings top out at more than 2,000 feet (600+ meters). At the same time, many of the 20th, 21st, and 22nd century buildings are in need of rehabilitation. Residents still enjoy a protected lakefront of parks and public spaces. A robust Tube system provides public transportation to and from neighborhoods. The downtown also has many landing pads designated for docking delivery and personal flying vehicles. Most goods and services are delivered directly to residents’ homes.
South Lawndale (“New Lawndale”)
The community area of New Lawndale, located on the Near West Side about 3 miles from the City Core, was created after merging North and South Lawndale into one larger community area. In 2117, the Planning Council demolished many of the buildings (Codex notes there are no longer any brick buildings in her neighborhood) to create large modular housing units out of new materials. These modular homes helped meet the growing population in New Lawndale, but efficiency and density were valued over unique place-ness and character. In this neighborhood, trees are often grown inside buildings, rather than outside, as part of a system to have clean air and beautify the city with greenery year-round.

Uptown
The Uptown neighborhood is located approximately 7 miles northwest of the city center. It retains its historic character because several of the buildings first constructed in the neighborhood (now nearly 300 years old) are still standing. It is a mix of new construction, adaptively reused buildings, and historic preservation—as well as a diverse, eclectic mix of people and cultures. Two hundred years after its last major renovation, The Uptown Theatre—the historic heart and center of community life—is once again at the forefront of the neighborhood’s future.
CHARACTER BACKGROUNDS

Codex Edwards Codex loves the 19th and 20th Centuries. She dresses up in styles fashionable 250+ years ago, listens to old popular music and collects historic objects from the era. Her family has inherited a large collection of oral history recordings, images, maps, and books about Chicago history, design, and planning from an ancestor. She can often be found carrying a backpack with a few of these treasured items and quoting out of date phrases from the 20th Century. She loves nature and travels to the far south side to a large prairie and wetland restoration to watch migrating birds. Codex lives in New Lawndale on the city’s West Side. Codex met Tsang several years ago on a virtual reality channel, but the two have never met face-to-face until they were placed into the same civic assignment.

Tsang Minato-Qui A resident of the Obama Gresham district on the city’s south side, Tsang is comfortable moving throughout the city in 2211. She is curious and loves learning about new inventions, puzzles, patterns, and systems. Tsang likes to use data to make evidence-based decisions—and this can be seen in the initiative she takes during the Planning Council assignment. Tsang wants to attend the Illinois Institute of Technology, but is nervous she won’t get in. When Gabriela and Rafael Yao offer to help her in exchange for her vote on the Planning Council, she is faced with a serious dilemma.

Octavius Bacca Charismatic and funny, privileged and entitled, Octavius lives a sheltered life in an elite residential tower in the City Core district of downtown Chicago. He has not been exposed to much outside his parents’ social and business networks of high-powered people and his knowledge of other people’s life experiences is limited. His parents pressure him to make decisions in ways that will have a positive impact on his future. Until his experience on the Planning Council with Tsang and Codex, he has not been challenged to think deeply about the impact of his choices or what life is like outside City Core. Kind and open-minded, he chairs the Planning Council and helps the group work through the process to make a decision they can present to the mayor.

Gabriela and Rafael Yao Gabriela and Rafael are cousins. Like Octavius, they live in City Core and are part of the city’s elite class. The Yaos are glad to be placed on the Planning Council and believe it is an opportunity to support their family’s business. When Rafael offers to help Tsang get into IIT in exchange for her vote, he learns more about her life outside City Core and develops empathy for the different perspectives each Planning Council member brings to the table.
**PAGE 87**

Morning in the Uptown neighborhood, 2211. Winter.

The story begins as the city announces civic assignments. In 2211, every 16-year old in Chicago is assigned to a year of civic service, similar to jury duty for adults today. The teens at the center of Chapter 3 have been assigned to the Planning Council and will play a role in making decisions about the city.

The authors drew on many influences to imagine what Chicago in 2211 might look like, including the television show, *The Expanse* and *Hyper-Reality* by Keiichi Matsude. On page 87, the screen greets an unknown viewer with “Good Morning” in Vietnamese and Chinese. The high temperature for the winter day is predicted is 52°F with a low of 31°F.

**PAGE 88, PANELS 1–3**

It’s morning in Uptown, a North Side Chicago community area located approximately 7 miles north of the city center. Residents in 2211 receive their morning news stories and information through synced digital channels that are visualized in the air at eye level. The Chicago Flag (still with four stars) greets one person as he enjoys breakfast. The morning show announcer is curious if anyone else is having Pho, a traditional Vietnamese soup, for breakfast. The neighborhood shows signs and traces that Vietnamese immigrants and Vietnamese culture still play an important role in the community.

**PAGE 89, PANEL 1**

The Uptown Entertainment District was originally anchored by The Uptown Theatre (4816 North Broadway, pictured center) which first opened in 1925. The Uptown Theatre was part of the movie palace chain developed by Balaban & Katz and designed by architects C.W. Rapp and George L. Rapp—the same team that developed the Chicago Theatre (1921) seen in Chapter 1, page 32.

In its heyday of the 1920s, Uptown was home to several large theaters, ballrooms, music halls for vaudeville acts, and jazz clubs—including The Green Mill, The Riviera Theatre, and The Aragon Ballroom. The Uptown Theatre was the largest theater in the city with a capacity for 4,300 seats—larger in volume than Radio City Music Hall in New York City. The Uptown Theatre closed in 1981 and was still shuttered in 2017, despite a massive community effort to restore the building. In 2211, the building still stands, but is in need of repair, as flying cars zip above North Broadway.

This morning, the city Planning Commission has announced that Uptown will receive funds for a public works project. The appointed teen council will decide how those funds are spent.

**PAGE 89, PANEL 2**

The voice speaking reminds them that, “the stronger and more vital the community spirit, the greater and more influential the city.” This phrase is an excerpt from the introduction to the 1911 *Wacker’s Manual*. *Wacker’s Manual* (1911), written by Walter D. Moody, was commissioned by the Chicago Plan Commission to promote adoption of Daniel Burnham and Edward Bennett’s 1909 *Plan of Chicago*. *Wacker’s Manual* was mandatory reading for more than two decades for all Chicago Public School students. It called on young people to learn about the building blocks of a city, the 1909 Plan and how to steward their city to greatness through their “united civic efforts.”

The aerial view shows Lake Michigan, Belmont Harbor (3200 North), and Diversey Harbor (2800 North), with the City Core to the south. The city’s public transport system, The Tube, runs along what is now Lake Shore Drive. Wrigley Field, home of the Chicago Cubs can be seen (now enclosed) along the right side of the image.
PANEL 90, PANELS 1–3

The announcer shares the names of the five teens selected for the Planning Council, including Codex Edwards (Panel 1) and Tsang Minato-Qui (Panel 2).

PAGE 91, PANELS 1 AND 3

The background of Codex’s channel shows some of the things she’s interested in, like old memes and books from the past two centuries. Her knowledge of Chicago’s 20th century history is sharp; she associates the Uptown neighborhood with jazz, gangsters, and prohibition.

PAGE 91, PANELS 4–6

In 2211, not only do personal digital channels float in the air above the viewer’s eyes, they can also be manipulated. Codex uses this technology to find a map of the Tube—the system that replaced the Chicago Transit Authority’s ‘L’ train.

PAGE 92, PANEL 1

As Codex searches for information on Uptown, she comes across a 1920s advertisement from the Uptown Theatre’s original developers, Balaban & Katz. Codex and Tsang are amazed that this area of the city still contains brick buildings like the Uptown Theatre. This is very different from their housing, which was built with contemporary materials that have replaced bricks.

PAGE 92, PANEL 2

Note the density and scale of buildings compared to the people in Codex’s residential neighborhood. These modular homes give an indication of how much Chicago has grown in the past 200 years. Efficiency, affordability and density were valued over unique place-ness and character. In this neighborhood, trees are growing inside buildings, rather than outside as part of a ecosystem that enables the city to clean air and have greenery year-round.
PAGE 93, PANEL 2
Codex’s comments highlight her inclination to take Uptown residents’ opinions into account. Although the Uptown Theatre is old and faded, in her eyes, it is still “glamorous.”

PAGE 94
Tsang rides the driverless Tube, an elevated transportation system that sits atop the old ‘L’ tracks.

PAGE 96, PANELS 2 AND 3
This is the first time Codex and Tsang have met in person, face to face.

PAGE 97, PANELS 2 AND 3
Even though this is the girls’ first meeting face to face, they are comfortable with each other. However, neither girl has spent much time in the City Core among the luxury, high-rise apartments. This is a new world for them.

PAGE 98, PANELS 1–3
The girls meet Octavius Bacca for the first time at his family’s home in the City Core. The other two members of the Planning Council—Gabriela and Rafael Yao—have already arrived. The Baccas’ apartment is lavish and contains a historic-looking staircase. The historic staircase in Octavius’ home may be a replica of one found in a 19th century historic skyscraper, or might have been taken from a historic building that had been demolished.

In 2211, only a few recognizable 20th and 21st century buildings are still found in the City Core. As we think to the future, there is a serious question to consider: what Chicago will do with tall buildings likes the Willis Tower in the next 200 years?
PAGE 99, PANELS 1 AND 2
It might seem surprising that the teens of the future are responsible for making such critical planning decisions about cities. But some Chicago civic leaders have been thinking about this for centuries. In 1911, Walter D. Moody, author of *Wacker’s Manual*, wrote:

“Conditions, then, demand that this new impulse of love for this city shall be fostered, and that our children shall be taught that they are the coming responsible heads of their various communities…”

“The needs and possibilities for expansion and development of community life under proper conditions must be outlined for the young, that effort under the urge of civic patriotism may be properly directed…”

“We have reached a time now when the citizen, to do his duty, must plan for the welfare of coming generations. It is necessary that the people realize, and that the young be taught, that the really great work of the world today is that which foresees and builds for the future.”

PAGE 99, PANEL 4
The proposal for a server farm and increased channel speed time—which Tsang is interested in—is similar to challenges Chicago faces in the early 21st century. The Smart Chicago Collaborative is a current civic organization with a mission of bridging the digital divide and improving digital equity, access, and inclusion for all Chicagoans. This digital divide has been an ongoing struggle for Chicago and many cities across the country.

PAGE 99, PANEL 5
Rafael Yao’s comments suggest that Chicago is experiencing an influx of new residents in the early 23rd century.

PAGE 100, PANEL 3
Codex is often the voice of reason on the Planning Council.

PAGE 100, PANEL 4
Even in an era of near-all digital communication, the city’s systems tutorial for the Planning Council is still issued as drawings on paper.

PAGE 100, PANEL 5
Octavius is interested in how his actions will impact his future. Yet, until his experience on the Planning Council, he has not been challenged to think deeply about the impact of his choices and decisions.

PAGE 101, PANEL 5
Tsang’s questions show she is interested in making data-driven decisions—through a site visit, evaluating the proposals, listening to Uptown’s residents, and understanding the statistics of the neighborhood. In 2011, the city of Chicago began releasing large numbers of publicly accessible data online. Tsang and her council members have access to similar data sets.
A virtual reality helmet allows Codex to explore 3-dimensional models and proposals for adaptive reuse of the Uptown Theatre. The Council has five proposals to consider:

1) Condos—This plan demolishes the detailed exterior and completely transforms/guts the interior for condo development and future buyers.

2) A server farm—A server farm is a cluster of thousands of computers that, when working together, are much more powerful than the individual computers alone. A great amount of electricity is needed to power the computers and keep them cool.

3) Community space—This proposal would provide community organizations, youth groups, artists, and musicians with meeting spaces and classrooms. Park district fieldhouses and public libraries in Chicago are often designed with spaces dedicated for community members to use for free by reservation, or for a small fee.

4) Water reuse—in the future water is a highly valued resource. This proposal suggests that the building would be converted to hold a water collection and filtration system.

5) A transit hub—This proposal calls for the building to be acquired by the city and redeveloped as a public property that would be used for utilities and transportation.

Tsang’s comments about cramped apartments are a reminder that her neighborhood of Obama-Gresham is extraordinarily dense. Typical of an efficient and compact apartment in the future, all furniture serves multiple functions (desk and bed) and can be easily modified.

Codex uses the phrase “truth channel,” a 23rd century colloquial term for a fact-based data or news source.

Over dinner, Octavius’ dad talks about his own history on the first teen Planning Council. He’s hoping the Planning Council will also serve as a career pathway for Octavius.

This map/diagram of the city shows the Yao family’s footprint and influence throughout Chicago.

Unobstructed views of Lake Michigan from the Bacca family’s dining room in a skyscraper apartment reinforces that the family is well off. It also denotes that the lake is still a defining feature of Chicago’s geography and identity as a city in the future.
PAGE 106, PANEL 1
The Uptown Station of the Chicago Transit Authority was originally designed in 1923 by architect Arthur Uranus Gerber. The white terracotta station at the corner of Broadway and Wilson Avenues served riders visiting the theaters and jazz clubs of Uptown. In 2017, the station underwent a $203 million dollar renovation and expansion.26

PAGE 107, PANELS 2 AND 3
The community leaders and preservation advocates for the Uptown Theatre illustrate that Uptown is still a culturally diverse neighborhood in 2211. The issues residents are discussing about the future and preservation of the building are not that different from conversations happening in 2017.27

PAGE 108, PANELS 1 AN 2
Codex and Tsang sit off to the side, listening carefully. Codex appreciates that “face spaces”—buildings and public spaces designed specifically to allow people to gather in person—are different than the digital channels and screen world people in the future typically inhabit.

PAGE 108, PANEL 3
Architectural tours remain an important part of Chicago, helping residents and visitors see new corners of the city and discover why design matters.

PAGE 111, PANELS 1–5
The teens enjoy lunch at a Ghanaian Vietnamese restaurant across the street from the Uptown Theatre. The food and clothing demonstrates rich ethnic diversity in the area. Neighbors overhear their conversation and jump in with their opinions. They understand the decisions made by the Planning Council will have lasting impact and permanency on the neighborhood.
After lunch, the teens walk a few blocks south and find themselves at Graceland Cemetery, at the corner of Irving Park Road and Clark Street. Graceland is one of the most significant cemeteries in the city. Designed in 1860, the cemetery became the final resting place of many of the city’s most well-known 19th and 20th century Chicagoans and their families— including Marshall Field, George Pullman, Potter and Bertha Palmer, and Cyrus McCormick.

In 1909, sculptor Lorado Taft designed a bronze monument in Graceland Cemetery that shows a more difficult and lonesome vision of death than typically seen. The family of Dexter Graves (1789–1844), one of the original settlers of Chicago, commissioned Taft to create the statue called “Eternal Silence.” Taft also designed the “Fountain of the Great Lakes” in the South Garden at the Art Institute of Chicago.

The teens walk past the tomb of department store tycoon and one of Chicago’s richest men, Marshall Field (1835–1906). Architect Henry Bacon and sculptor Daniel Chester French collaborated to design the sculpture for the Field Family. The sad and contemplative statue, called “Memory,” sits in a chair very similar to the one found at the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, DC. That’s not a coincidence. A few years after this project, Bacon and French would go on to design the famous monument.

Many of Chicago’s most well-known architects and engineers are buried at Graceland Cemetery, including Ludwig Mies van der Rohe (Federal Center), Louis Sullivan (Carson Pirie Scott Building; see Chapter 1, page 30), William Le Baron Jenney (Home Insurance Building), Fazlur Khan (Willis/Sears Tower), and Daniel Burnham (Rookery Building). Burnham and his family have one of the most prominent sites in all of Graceland Cemetery—on their own island in Lake Willowmere. The Burnham family monuments are very different than typical monuments, which are more finished and refined. The Burnham family headstones are large, rough boulders of red granite with a simple plaque.

Daniel Hudson Burnham (1846–1912) and his wife Margaret Sherman Burnham (1850–1945) had two sons and one daughter. They are buried nearby on the island in Lake Willowmere of Graceland Cemetery, along with their daughter and two sons who became architects. Daniel Jr. and Hubert Burnham are best known for their design of the Carbide and Carbon Building (now the Hard Rock Hotel).

Across Lake Willowmere stands the largest tomb in Graceland Cemetery for Potter and Bertha Palmer. Often called the “royal family” of 19th century Chicago, Potter and Bertha were wealthy real estate investors, hotel and department store operators, and philanthropists.
PAGE 114, PANELS 1 AND 2
Tsang and Rafael Yao meet in the 23rd century version of a TOD, a transit oriented development, which encourages or mandates new housing be located within walking distance of public transportation. In 2211, housing and retail are developed in strong alignment with transportation and most new developments are integrated into transit plans. The cafe where this scene is set reflects a retro 2010’s Vaporwave aesthetic.

PAGE 115, PANEL 4
Tsang mentions “food houses” in her neighborhood of Obama-Gresham. Being able to walk to a store that has food—especially fresh food—is a priority for people. Today, the term “food desert” is used to describe communities that do not have ready access to grocery stores and affordable healthy food. In the 23rd century, “food houses,” where food is grown as well as distributed, help eliminate food deserts.

PAGE 116, PANEL 1
Tsang references a plan for Obama-Gresham that the residents did not want. Many designers participate in community design projects with the goal of helping residents. But without listening to the community members and engaging them throughout the process of design, projects will never fully meet their needs.

PAGE 119, PANELS 1 AND 2
In addition to her love of the city, Codex also enjoys exploring natural areas and is drawn to the restored wetlands and prairie on the far Southeast Side.
While in the restored prairie, Codex sees a scarlet tanager. In the 21st Century, this migratory bird is commonly found migrating through the region in March and April. The appearance of this bird during the “winter” is a sign that global warming has affected the region and the flora and fauna.

PAGE 119, PANEL 3
With population shifts toward the City Core in the north, some underpopulated areas on the South Side became part of a prairie restoration area next to Calumet Park.
In 2014, the Green Healthy Neighborhoods (GHN) started as a joint planning effort by the city and the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP). Formally adopted by the Chicago Plan Commission in 2014, GHN recommends changing vacant lots into new parks, urban farms and storm-water retention areas, in order to make “productive landscapes” out of Chicago’s surplus of vacant land.
PAGE 120, PANEL 3
Codex spots a sandhill crane. These migratory birds have a 5-foot wingspan and, in the 21st Century, migrate through Chicago twice a year. They spend winter in the Southern United States and Northern Mexico and breed in the summer in the northern United States and Canada.
When Codex sees these two species in the winter of 2211 it implies that global warming may have affected their migration calendar or that they are, perhaps, living in the area year-round.
The nature preserve Codex visits is situated on reclaimed and restored prairie, marsh and wetlands. Some of the extensive nature preserve sits on what was once industrial areas and areas with low population. Currently there are many groups active in trying to clean up and preserve this area in Chicago including the Southeast Environmental Taskforce.

PAGE 121, PANEL 2
Codex and Tsang explain the history of the Uptown Theatre, the proposals that the Planning Council was presented with, and the issues they considered. Codex mentions that the exterior of the building was last restored in 2020.

PAGE 121, PANEL 3
Codex explains the council’s goals. She cites language borrowed directly from the introduction to the 1909 Plan of Chicago by Daniel Burnham and Edward Bennett.
“… It should be understood, however, that such radical changes as are proposed herein cannot possibly be realized immediately. Indeed, the aim has been to anticipate the needs of the future as well as to provide for the necessities of the present: in short, to direct the development of the city towards an end that must seem ideal, but is practical.”

PAGE 122, PANEL 2
As Tsang speaks about the history and texture of the neighborhood, drawings, diagrams, and historic images are projected for all to see. The second image on the left is a reference to a 1974 photo, “Two Youths in Uptown, Chicago, Illinois, a Neighborhood of Poor White Southerners,” by photographer Danny Lyon.

PAGE 123
Octavius’ language about the “future heads of households” echoes Walter D. Moody’s Introduction to Wacker’s Manual of the Plan of Chicago. “Conditions, then, demand that this new impulse of love for this city shall be fostered, and that our children shall be taught that they are the coming responsible heads of their various communities.”
ADDITIONAL READING


14 “Dubai to launch driverless flying cars by this summer,” by Chris Nelson, thenational.ae, http://bit.ly/2ul7IrM


25 Server farm images, i.dailymail.co.uk, http://dailym.ai/2uXYOUM

26 “Gerber Building at CTA’s Wilson station being restored to Jazz Age glory,” by Mary Wisniewski, chicagotribune.com, http://trib.in/2hp9FSD
31 “Hands of an Artist: Daniel French’s Lincoln Memorial,” npr.org, http://n.pr/2u1sX2w
36 “The Burnham Gene,” by Geoffrey Johnson, chicagomag.com, http://chi.mg/2v0oAWP
